

the accusing candidate's face and voice are nowhere to be found, and it is easy for folks to forget—conveniently to forget—who is doing the attacking.

I bring a special awareness to this issue because in the Senate special election with Senator SMITH, with whom I work on a great many issues and publish a bipartisan agenda at the start of each Congress, meeting me more than halfway as a colleague and friend in the Senate, he and I were in a campaign that was completely and totally out of hand, and many Oregonians simply did not want to vote. They got to the point where they said: The stench in this debate on both sides is so great, we are turned off the political process altogether.

I made the judgment in that race that I was going to take all the ads off the air about Senator SMITH. I said: This is not what I went into public service for—to attack somebody else. The reason I got involved with the Gray Panthers—and I was codirector of the senior citizens group for 7 years before I was elected to the House—is because I was interested in ideas, the best ideas. I did not care if they were Democratic or Republican ideas. Oregon on a bipartisan basis came up with breakthroughs in home health care and a variety of other ways to serve senior citizens.

I looked at what was happening in the Senate special election and said: This is completely contrary to everything I have stood for since my days with the Gray Panthers and contrary to all the reasons for which I went into public service. I went into public service to offer ideas and creative suggestions for making my State and my country a better place, and all of a sudden in that Senate special election, I was not recognizing what was being said in my name because all of it was just the opposite of positive. It was just attack, attack, attack.

My colleague, Senator SMITH, to his credit, shares my view that our campaigns got completely out of hand.

For about 3 weeks, the people of Oregon had balance in their hand. I made no reference to Senator SMITH at all. I took all of the ads off the air that mentioned his name and talked only about the kinds of initiatives I wanted to pursue, issues we talked about in the Senate today such as the bipartisan proposal Senator SNOWE and I have on prescription drugs.

I admit I come to this question of attack ads colored by a truly searing experience I had in 1996 and it is why Senator COLLINS and I felt so strongly about trying to make this change.

I think owning up to statements about what a candidate says about their opponent is going to make a difference. I think it is going to cause a candidate to think twice before they go forward with these negative blitzes on their opponents. I am going to be frank. That is what I wanted to see American politics be all about after 1996. That is why I have tried to keep it

positive and to focus on areas where in the public policy arena people can be helped, people can be empowered, and they can make choices that make a difference for their lives.

Certainly the debate on campaign finance reform has been contentious, but I think we can all agree that reasonable ideas can help clean up this process, reasonable ideas can help drain the swamp that has become the way political campaigns are financed and run in much of this country.

I believe the stand-by-your-ad proposal, which holds candidates accountable, and which I was honored to have a chance to work with Senator COLLINS of Maine, is going to help clean up campaigns. It is going to help make candidates more accountable and make the politics and political discourse in this country more positive and more open.

I yield the floor.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be excused from presence in the Senate starting at 5:30 tomorrow evening until the Senate reconvenes after the Easter recess.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

46TH ANNIVERSARY OF TUNISIA INDEPENDENCE

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the country of Tunisia, which is celebrating the 46th anniversary of its independence from France.

I appreciate Tunisia's economic achievements. Tunisia's Gross Domestic Product has increased an average of 5.5 percent in the past 4 years, and inflation is slowing. The government has worked to increase privatization, and its prudent approach toward debt is commendable. The United States in 2000 exported approximately \$350 million in goods to Tunisia, and I believe our diplomatic ties will strengthen as our trading activities increase. Stability in the Middle East is of paramount importance to both our countries, and I thank Tunisia for its past efforts to work toward peace.

Tunisia's policies toward women's rights and non-Muslims' religious freedoms are exemplary in the Arab world, and I hope the nation's leaders will continue to work toward promoting greater political freedom and respect for human rights throughout the region.

More than 200 years ago, the United States and Tunisia signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship, and I look forward to many more years of cooperation between our nations.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the forty-sixth anniversary of Tunisian Independence from France.

The Republic of Tunisia is a great ally of the United States. Since her independence, Tunisia has become a

model for economic development. The Tunisian economy has been opened up to the outside world, and in 1995, Tunisia became the first country south of the Mediterranean to sign a free-trade agreement with the European Union.

Tunisian President Ben Ali has been instrumental in implementing a stable and effective constitutional government, protecting democracy and increasing political participation by all citizens. The Republic of Tunisia also has a commendable record on human rights, protecting all citizens. In addition, Tunisia has actively contributed to the search for a lasting peace in the Middle East, offering unwavering support to the Middle East peace process.

While Tunisia has become a great contributor to the world both economically and culturally, as Americans, we must also remember the tremendous role Tunisia played during World War II as part of the Allied Force and the support Tunisia offered the United States during the Cold War. For this, we will always be grateful.

The United States was the first country to recognize Tunisia's independence in 1956, and it is only fitting that we take the time to reflect on Tunisia's contributions to the world. I congratulate the Republic of Tunisia and its citizens, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE INTER-STATE TRANSPORTATION AND LOCAL AUTHORITY ACT OF 2002

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, yesterday I joined as an original cosponsor of legislation introduced by my Midwestern colleague, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. VOINOVICH. This legislation is similar to legislation introduced by the Senator from Ohio and the Senator from Indiana, Mr. BAYH, in the previous Congress. I am pleased to be working with the Senator from Ohio on this very important issue. I know that he, as a former Governor, is intimately aware of the concerns that the growing trash trade poses for the States that we represent.

We in the Midwest, especially those of us fortunate enough to be from the Great Lakes States, enjoy a very high quality of life, beautiful scenery, small, neighborly towns, and spectacular natural resources. We hold it as a particular point of pride that we, in many instances, have the luxury of avoiding many environmental problems, and we have structured our State and local governments in Wisconsin to try to be sure that we continue to avoid them. We in Wisconsin, however, are unable to protect our communities, which have done a good regulatory job, from having to deal with the solid waste mess created by our neighboring communities in other States. Instead, my State has been forced to accept other States' municipal solid waste in ever increasing amounts.

We need to enact legislation to give back to States the power to be able to